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PAGE 01 BUENOS 00417 062215Z

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SCA-01 SCS-03 SY-05 SCT-01 CIAE-00

INR-07 NSAE-00 SS-15 NSC-05 H-02 PA-01 PRS-01 CIA-00

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6261

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ASEC, PHUS, AR
SUBJECT: ABDUCTION OF TWO MORMON MISSIONARIES
1. THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION FURNISHED OUR 90 BY DUTY OFFICER JULY 2, 1976: DURING THE EVENING OF JULY 2, 1976, JAMES E. FAUST, AREA SUPERVISOR FOR THE MORMON CHURCH AND ASSISTANT TO THE COUNCIL OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES, [illegible] ADVISED IN SUBSTANCE THAT ON FRIDAY, JUNE 25, 1976, TWO MORMON MISSIONARIES, PETER ALLEN SHAW AND THAYNE LARSON, WERE CONTACTED BY A YOUNG WOMAN WHO SAID SHE HAD A FRIEND WHO WANTED TO SPEAK WITH THEM. THEY AGREED TO MEET HER THE FOLLOWING DAY AND BE TAKEN TO HER FRIEND. ON SATURDAY, JUNE 26, SHE INTRODUCED THEM TO A MAN WHO TOOK THEM IN HIS CAR FROM THEIR POST IN CORRIENTES TO CANDELARIA. WHEN THEY ARRIVED IN CANDELARIA, THEY WERE TAKEN TO A VACANT HOUSE. AT THAT POINT, FOUR MEN ARMED WITH KNIVES AND GUNS CAME TO THE CAR, TOOK THE TWO MISSIONARIES INTO THE HOUSE, TIED THEM UP, BLINDFOLDED THEM, AND TOOK THEM TO A CANOE OR BOAT. THEY SET ACROSS THE PARANA RIVER, BUT THE BOAT SANK A SHORT DISTANCE FROM THE OPPOSITE BANK, AND THEY HAD TO SWIM AND WADE ASHORE. WHEN THEY WERE MET BY FOUR OTHER MEN WHO TOOK THEM INTO THE PARAGUAYAN JUNGLE TO A SHACK, WHERE THEY STAYED FOR TWO DAYS. AFTER THIS PERIOD OF TIME, THEY WERE MOVED TO A BETTER HOUSE, WHERE THERE WERE A WOMAN AND A YOUNG MAN (WHO WAS POSSIBLY HER SON).
PAGE 02 BUENOS 00417 062215Z

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THIS YOUNG MAN SAID HE DIDN'T LIKE WHAT WAS GOI[illegible] ON AND WAS GOING TO FETCH THE POLICE. HE DID. AND THE POLICE ARRIVED DURING THE NIGHT, BROKE INTO THE HOUSE, AND ARRESTED THOSE PRESENT. AT THE TIME THE POLICE RAIDED THE HOUSE, ONE OF THE MISSIONARIES REALIZED SOMEONE HAS RED TO GET HIS SHOE AND WAS SHOT IN THE SHOULDER BY A POLICEMAN WHO APPARENTLY THOUGHT HE WAS REACHING FOR A WEAPON. FOLLOWING THE RAID, SHAW (THE WOUNDED ONE) AND LARSON WALKED ABOUT THREE MILES THROUGH THE JUNGLE TO THE PARAGUAYAN TOWN OF ENCARNACION, WHERE SHAW WAS HOSPITALIZED AND WHERE THE TWO OF THEM ARE NOW AWAITING THE BEGINNING OF LEGAL PROCEEDINGS, SCHEDULED TO START ON MONDAY, JULY 6. AS SOON AS THEIR ROLE IN THESE LEGAL PROCEEDINGS IS OVER, THEY WILL BE RETURNED TO THEIR POST IN ASUNCION FOR OUT-PROCESSING, THEN FLOWN BACK TO THE UNITED STATES. SHAW'S SHOULDER WOUND DESTROYED SOME MUSCLE, AND HE WILL NEED ADDITIONAL MEDICAL CARE IN THE UNITED STATES.

2. ON THE DAY FOLLOWING THEIR ABDUCTION, I.E., ON SUNDAY, JUNE 28, TWO NOTES WERE PLACED IN THE BACK OF THE AUTOMOBILE OF MR. GOMEZ, THE CHURCH'S BRANCH PRESIDENT IN ASUNCION, WHICH DEMANDED A RANSOM OF 1.5 MILLION DOLLARS. THE NOTES WERE ISSUED BY AN ORGANIZATION CALLED "ORGANIZACION POLITICO MILITAR PARAGUAYAN.". THE NOTES SAID THE RANSOM MONEY WOULD BE USED TO PURCHASE WEAPONS FOR THIS GROUP. NOTHING MORE WAS HEARD FROM THIS ORGANIZATION UNTIL JULY 2, WHEN ANOTHER NOTE WAS DELIVERED BY MAIL FROM IT; BY THIS TIME, OF COURSE, THE TWO MISSIONARIES HAD BEEN FREED BY THE POLICE.

3. IN ADDITION FAUST COULD FURNISH NO INFORMATION CONCERNING THE NUMBER OF MEMBERS OF THIS ORGANIZATION ARRESTED IN PARAGUAY. HE DID STATE THAT THE MORMON CHURCH HAD RECENTLY RECEIVED PUBLICITY IN CONNECTION WITH ALLEGED REQUEST FROM HOWARD HUGHES WHICH WAS UNTRUE BUT COULD HAVE LED TO THE KIDNAPPING. ACCORDING TO FAUST, THE POSITION OF THE MORMON CHURCH IS THAT IT DOES NOT PAY RANSOM FOR ITS REPRESENTATIVES EVEN THOUGH IT MIGHT RESULT IN THE LOSS OF A MISSIONARY.

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